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Agenda item 139

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Ms. Diana Minyi **Lee** (Singapore)

I. Introduction

1. The previous recommendation made by the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly under agenda item 139 is set out in the report of the Committee contained in document A/71/638.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 9th, 10th and 23rd meetings, on 28 October and 23 December 2016. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records.[1]

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (A/71/186);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/71/257);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules (A/71/258);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform: towards a global, dynamic, adaptable and engaged workforce for the United Nations (A/71/323);

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on mobility (A/71/323/Add.1);

[1] A/C.5/71/SR.9, A/C.5/71/SR.10 and A/C.5/71/SR.23.

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(f) Report of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reforms: assessment of the system of desirable ranges (A/71/323/Add.2);

(g) Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/71/334);

(h) Related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/71/557);

(i) Report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/71/360);

(j) Report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff and consultants and individual contractors (A/71/360/Add.1);

(k) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations" (A/70/685);

(l) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations" (A/70/685/Add.1);

(m) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Succession planning in the United Nations system organizations" (A/71/393);

(n) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Succession planning in the United Nations system organizations" (A/71/393/Add.1).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.11

4. At its 23rd meeting, on 23 December 2016, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Human resources management" (A/C.5/71/L.11), submitted by the Chair of the Committee on the basis of informal consultations coordinated by the representative of Ireland.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/71/L.11 without a vote (see para. 6).

III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Human resources management

The General Assembly,

Recalling Articles 8, 97, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling also its resolutions 42/220 A of 21 December 1987, 49/222 A and B of 23 December 1994 and 20 July 1995, 51/226 of 3 April 1997, 52/219 of 22 December 1997, 52/252 of 8 September 1998, 53/221 of 7 April 1999, 55/258 of 14 June 2001, 57/305 of 15 April 2003, 58/285 of 8 April 2004, 58/296 of 18 June 2004, 59/266 of 23 December 2004, 59/287 of 13 April 2005, 60/1 of 16 September 2005, 60/238 of 23 December 2005, 60/254 of 8 May 2006, 60/260 of 8 May 2006, 61/244 of 22 December 2006, 61/276, section VIII, of 29 June 2007, 62/238, section XXI, of 22 December 2007, 62/248 of 3 April 2008, 63/250 of 24 December 2008, 63/271 of 7 April 2009, 65/247 of 24 December 2010, 66/234 of 24 December 2011, 67/255 of 12 April 2013, 68/252 of 27 December 2013, 68/265 of 9 April 2014, 70/244 of 23 December 2015 and 70/286 of 17 June 2016, its decision 70/553 B of 1 April 2016 and its other relevant resolutions and decisions,

Having considered the relevant reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management submitted to the General Assembly[1] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2]

Having also considered the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on succession planning in the United Nations system organizations[3] and on the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations,[4] as well as the comments of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination thereon,[5]

1. *Reaffirms* that the staff of the United Nations is an invaluable asset of the Organization, and commends its contribution to furthering the purposes and principles of the United Nations;

2. *Pays tribute* to the memory of all staff members who have lost their lives in the service of the Organization;

3. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions,[2] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

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[1] A/71/186, A/71/257, A/71/258, A/71/323, A/71/323/Add.1, A/71/323/Add.2, A/71/334, A/71/360 and A/71/360/Add.1.

[2] A/71/557.

[3] See A/71/393.

[4] See A/70/685.

[5] A/71/393/Add.1 and A/70/685/Add.1.

I
Human resources management reform

4. *Emphasizes* the fundamental importance of human resources management reform in the United Nations as a contribution to the enhancement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations and of the international civil service, and reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of this reform;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to modernize, streamline and integrate the Organization's human resources management structures and functions, taking into account expected benefits, efficiencies and lessons learned from the implementation of previous reform, and to present detailed proposals for the consideration of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session;

6. *Underlines* the need for a comprehensive and robust workforce-planning system as a key component of human resources management, acknowledges the progress made, and requests the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to develop a comprehensive and effective workforce- and succession-planning proposal and to report thereon at the seventy-third session;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in the context of the ongoing human resources management reforms and business transformation projects, to continue to ensure the equal treatment of candidates with equivalent educational backgrounds during the recruitment process, taking fully into account the fact that Member States have different education systems and that no education system shall be considered the standard to be applied by the Organization;

8. *Reiterates* that the Secretary-General has to ensure that the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity serve as the paramount consideration in the employment of staff, with due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations;

9. *Reaffirms* the provisions of regulation 4.2 of the Staff Rules and Staff Regulations of the United Nations, and decides to retain the criterion of geographical status in the staff selection system as one of the key elements to ensure geographical balance at each level for posts subject to geographical distribution;

10. *Also reaffirms* the need to respect the equality of the two working languages of the Secretariat, further reaffirms the use of additional working languages in specific duty stations as mandated, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to ensure that vacancy announcements specify the need for either of the working languages of the Secretariat, unless the functions of the post require a specific working language;

11. *Acknowledges* that the interaction of the United Nations with the local population in the field is essential and that language skills constitute an important element of the selection and training processes, and therefore affirms that a good command of the official language or languages spoken in the country of residence should be taken into account as an additional asset during those processes;

12. *Notes with serious concern* that the 120-day target for filling a post has not been reached, and requests the Secretary-General to investigate the reasons for delays at each stage of the staff selection and recruitment processes, including the

stages of candidate recommendation and central review body endorsement, and requests the Secretary-General to include in his next overview report, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving the 120-day target for recruitment set by the Assembly;

13. *Takes note* of paragraphs 36 and 84 of the report of the Advisory Committee, decides to reduce the standard posting period for position-specific job openings from 60 days to 45 days for jobs in the Professional and higher categories, on a provisional basis as a pilot phase, decides to keep this measure under review, and requests the Secretary-General to report on its full impact in his next overview report;

14. *Emphasizes* the important role of the young professionals programme in improving the geographical representation of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States and in ensuring the continued rejuvenation of the Secretariat;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to review his proposal to replace the existing general exam paper with a general test of cognitive and social abilities and to present a detailed analysis thereon in his next overview report;

16. *Takes note* of paragraph 41 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and endorses the proposal of the Secretary-General[*] to extend to three years the period of time during which successful candidates may remain on the roster for the young professionals programme;

17. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General that he continue his ongoing effort to ensure the attainment of equitable geographical distribution in the Secretariat and to ensure as wide a geographical distribution of staff as possible in all departments and offices and at all levels, including at the Director and higher levels, of the Secretariat, and requests him to report thereon in his next overview report;

18. *Recalls* paragraph 65 of its resolution 65/247 and paragraph 17 of its resolution 66/265 of 21 June 2012, in which it requested the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to ensure the proper representation of troop-contributing countries in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support of the Secretariat, taking into account their contribution to United Nations peacekeeping, and requests the Secretary-General to report thereon in his proposed budget for the support account for peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018;

19. *Expresses serious concern* about the slow pace of progress towards the goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations system, especially in senior, policymaking and field positions, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations;

20. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to implement a comprehensive strategy to intensify efforts to ensure greater representation of women in the Secretariat, particularly in senior leadership positions, including through active recruitment and retention policies, and requests the Secretary-General to provide an update in his next overview report on progress towards the

[*] A/71/323, para. 52 (d).

goal of gender balance, including on the adequate representation of women from developing countries, as a matter of priority, and on how managers have been held to account for contributing to gender targets;

21. *Reiterates* that the overarching objectives of a performance management system are to measure performance and reward good performance and to address underperformance in a credible and effective manner and that it should be easily understood by staff and management, and requests the Secretary-General to further intensify his efforts to ensure that a more refined performance management framework is implemented throughout the Organization, particularly at the managerial and leadership levels, supported by adequate training and guidance;

22. *Notes* that the current ratings distribution is not an accurate reflection of performance in the Organization, and requests the Secretary-General to analyse and report on the effectiveness of system enhancements, patterns and trends in completion rates, ratings distribution and participation in performance management training in his next overview report;

23. *Also notes* the establishment of a learning and career support strategy to support staff through learning and development opportunities, in particular in respect of enhancing management and leadership skills within the Organization;

24. *Recalls* paragraph 56 of its resolution 70/244, and encourages the Secretary-General to make further efforts to ensure work-life balance and provide career development opportunities, which are important elements in motivating and retaining staff;

25. *Also recalls* paragraph 68 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and requests the Secretary-General to undertake a more extensive analysis of potential costs and benefits and to report thereon in his next overview report;

II
Mobility

26. *Takes note* of the progress achieved in the implementation of the first managed mobility exercise for Political, Peace and Humanitarian Network (POLNET) staff members, the result thereof and the preliminary nature of the findings and lessons learned, as reported by the Secretary-General,[7] and looks forward to the continued implementation of the system as adopted in its resolution 68/265;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to conduct further analysis and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session in order to realize the full benefits of mobility, such as reduced recruitment time, a dynamic workforce and ensuring the fair sharing of the burden of service in hardship duty stations;

28. *Urges* the Secretary-General to ensure necessary cooperation among related departments and offices in the implementation of the new staff selection and managed mobility system, and requests him to report thereon in his next progress report;

[7] A/71/323/Add.1.

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide detailed information on his proposal to include vacant positions at B, C, D and E duty stations in the managed mobility system in his next progress report;

30. *Reaffirms its request* to the Secretary-General that he ensure the fair treatment of all staff members in the context of the reassignment pool related to the managed mobility framework;

31. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the consistent and transparent application of the criteria for possible deferments of or exemptions from mobility requirements;

III
Assessment of desirable ranges

32. *Notes with concern* that the Secretary-General has failed to present a proposal for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges, and in this regard requests him to present to the General Assembly, no later than at its seventy-third session, proposals for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges, including by retaining or widening the current base number of Professional posts, with a view to establishing a more effective tool for ensuring equitable geographical distribution within the Secretariat in relation to all posts financed through the regular budget;

IV
Composition of the Secretariat

33. *Notes with concern* the upward shift in the grade structure of the Secretariat and the relatively low number of junior-level posts, and requests the Secretary-General to take concrete measures to reverse this trend, including a review of all existing positions at the levels of Director, Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General, with a view to identifying any overlapping functions and responsibilities and reducing the overall number of posts at these levels, and to report thereon in the next budget submission;

34. *Reiterates its concern* over the increase in the use of consultants, especially in the core activities of the Organization, stresses that the use of consultants should be governed by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular section VIII of its resolution 53/221, and that they should be drawn from the widest possible geographical basis, and requests the Secretary-General to make the greatest possible use of in-house capacity and to report to the Assembly at its seventy-third session on the measures taken to that effect;

35. *Welcomes* the United Nations internship programme, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of United Nations objectives and the learning experience of the participants;

V
Practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour

36. *Recognizes* the importance of high standards of investigative practices within the Organization, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to

continue to improve investigative procedures and to report thereon in his next report;

37. *Requests* the Secretary-General to finalize and issue an administrative instruction on disciplinary matters, as a matter of priority, without further delay and no later than 31 December 2016, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session;

VI
Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules

38. *Approves* the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and notes the amendments to the Staff Rules set out in the report of the Secretary-General,[5] subject to the provisions of the present resolution;

39. *Takes note* of paragraph 129 of the report of the Advisory Committee with regard to broadening the scope of staff rule 9.9 (b) to cover other types of serious misconduct;

40. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide information on the impact of the amendment to staff rule 10.4 on investigative activities in the context of his next report;

41. *Decides* that new staff rule 3.20 proposed to implement the new recruitment incentive approved in paragraph 53 of its resolution 70/244 shall read as follows:

> An incentive payment for the recruitment of experts in highly specialized fields in instances in which the Organization was unable to attract suitably qualified personnel may be made under conditions to be prescribed by the Secretary-General. The amount of the recruitment incentive shall not exceed 25 per cent of the annual net base salary for each year of the agreed appointment.

VII
Activities of the Ethics Office

42. *Commends* the Ethics Office on its exceptional ongoing efforts to foster a culture of ethics, integrity, transparency and accountability in the Organization, and welcomes the efforts of the Office to increase awareness of ethics-related issues through outreach, training and education;

43. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to encourage all eligible senior officials who have not yet publicly disclosed a summary of their assets to do so in future cycles, and also requests the Secretary-General to collect data relating to gifts and honours received by Secretariat officials, to monitor related trends and to report thereon in his next report;

44. *Recalls* paragraph 146 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and urges the Secretary-General to finalize and promulgate the revised policy on protection against retaliation by the end of 2016, to ensure the swift and effective

[5] A/71/258.

implementation thereof and to promote an organizational culture in which staff are not reluctant to speak up and that those who retaliate are held accountable;

45. *Also recalls* paragraph 147 of the report of the Advisory Committee, and requests the Secretary-General to develop in his next report a proposal concerning the independence of the Ethics Office for the consideration of the General Assembly.